



CLAIMS

1 (currently amended): Apparatus for processing articles, comprising a hollow drum having permeable walls, at one end an inlet for receiving articles onto an inside surface of the permeable walls;

at the other end an outlet for discharging articles from the drum;

means for rotating the drum about an axis having at least a horizontal component at such speed that centrifugal force acting on the articles is sufficient to overcome the gravity acting on the articles, and progressing means for applying a first jet of fluid to the articles through the permeable wall, to displace the articles from the inside surface and in a direction away from the inlet towards the outlet,

the apparatus further including rejection means for selectively applying a second jet of fluid to project rejected articles into means for removing rejected articles from the drum;

inspection means directed at a surface of the permeable wall, and

control means responsive to output from said inspection means to reject articles according to predetermined criteria and to operate said rejection means to apply said second jet of fluid selectively to remove the rejected articles.

2-4 (canceled)

5 (currently amended): Apparatus as claimed in claim [3] 1, wherein the rejection means is operable to apply a plurality of second jets selectively, and wherein the control means is operative to analyze output from the inspection means to select one or more second jets.

6 (original): Apparatus as claimed in claim 5, wherein the inspection means is a line scan camera.

7 (original): Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first jet is arranged to displace articles in a direction having a component normal to and towards the axis of the drum and a component parallel to the axis and towards the outlet of the drum.

8 (original): A plurality of apparatus as claimed in claim 1 arranged in sequence so that the outlet of one drum acts as an inlet to the next one.

9 (currently amended): A method for processing articles, comprising:
conveying the articles through an inlet and onto an inside surface of permeable walls of a hollow drum;
rotating the drum about an axis having at least a horizontal component at such speed that centrifugal force acting on the articles is sufficient to overcome the gravity acting on the articles; [and]
applying a first jet of fluid to the articles through the permeable wall, to displace the articles from the inside surface and in a direction away from the inlet, including selectively applying a second jet of fluid to project rejected articles into means for removing rejected articles from the drum;
inspecting articles and rejecting articles according to predetermined criteria, and
applying said second jet of fluid selectively to remove the rejected articles .

10, 11 (canceled)

12 (currently amended): A method as claimed in claim [11] 9, including analyzing output from a camera used to inspect said articles to select one or more second jets.

13 (new): Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said inspection means is directed at an inside surface of said wall.

14 (new): Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said inspection means is directed at an outside surface of said wall.